

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00
INRE-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 OMB-01 /107 W
-----036934 191046Z /16

O 191034Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1903
INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
SECDEF WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USICA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11128

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
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TAGS: PINS, MOPS, SOPN, UR, CG
SUBJECT: TASS STATEMENT ON SHABA EVENTS

SUMMARY: TASS STATEMENT ON SHABA EVENTS ACCUSES UNNAMED
IMPERIALIST FORCES OF SPREADING FALSE STORY OF SOVIET
PARTICIPATION IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY WESTERN INTERFERENCE.
TASS STATEMENT CERTAINLY REFLECTS SOVIET DESIRE TO SEIZE

PROPAGANDA INITIATIVE AND MAY REPRESENT SOVIET CONCERN
OVER POSSIBLE EAST-WEST FALLOUT AS RESULT OF SOVIET/
CUBAN CULPABILITY. END SUMMARY.

1. MAY 18 CENTRAL PRESS CARRIES TASS "STATEMENT" ON SHABA
EVENTS. ASSUME DEPT HAS TEXT. IN BRIEF, STATEMENT:

-- SAYS "ANTI-GOVERNMENT, ARMED, ACTIONS" ARE USED BY
IMPERIALISTS TO SPREAD FALSE STORY OF SOVIET PARTICIPATION
IN EXTERNAL AGGRESSION.

-- CLAIMS THAT THIS IS EFFORT BY THOSE A) INTERESTED IN
INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND
B) NOT OPPOSED TO PLAYING ROLE OF "GENDARME" ON
AFRICAN CONTINENT (COMMENT: TASS NEW YORK ARTICLE IN MAY
17 PRAVDA HAD ACCUSED U.S. OF BEING "GENDARME" OF AFRICA.
END COMMENT.)

-- IMPLICITLY ACCUSES THOSE WHO THINK UP FABRICATION
AGAINST SOVIET UNION OF THEMSELVES PREPARING MILITARY
INTERFERENCE IN ZAIRIAN AFFAIRS.

-- STATES THAT SOVIET "PEOPLE" HAVE FRIENDLY FEELINGS
TOWARD ZAIRIAN "PEOPLE" AND THAT NO ARMED SOVIET PERSON
HAS BEEN OR IS ON ZAIRIAN TERRITORY.

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-- DECLARES THAT TASS IS "AUTHORIZED TO
DECISIVELY REFUTE ABSURD FABRICATION" ABOUT SOVIET PARTICI-
PATION IN EVENTS IN ZAIRE.

-- WARNS THAT IF IN CENTER OF AFRICA, AS RESULT OF INTER-
FERENCE BY IMPERIALIST FORCES, NEW DANGEROUS HOT SPOTS OF
TENSIONS ARISE, THEN ALL RESPONSIBILITY IS ON THOSE WHO
FAN THE CONFLICT SITUATION IN AND AROUND ZAIRE IN
THEIR OWN NARROW INTERESTS.

2. COMMENT. TASS STATEMENT IS FAIRLY HIGH UP IN SCALE OF
AUTHORITY OF OFFICIAL SOVIET ANNOUNCEMENTS. IN THAT
REGARD EMBASSY IS STRUCK BY SPEED WITH WHICH STATEMENT
WAS ISSUED AND BY DEFENSIVE TONE IT ASSUMES. IT IS
OBVIOUS THAT SOVIETS ARE ATTEMPTING TO SEIZE
PROPAGANDA INITIATIVE BEFORE WESTERN AND AFRICAN
LEADERS CAN GET SERIOUSLY CRANKED UP OVER THE SHABA ISSUE.
THIS MAY REFLECT SOVIET CONCERN OVER NEW ROUND OF NEGATIVE
EAST-WEST FALL OUT WHICH MIGHT BE CAUSED BY ANY EVIDENCE
OF SOVIET/CUBAN SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT IN SHABA CONFLICT.
TASS STATEMENT CAREFULLY SETS UP AND KNOCKS DOWN STRAW MAN
IN FORM OF PHYSICAL SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN SHABA EVENTS.

REAL ISSUE AS FAR AS SOVIET UNION IS CONCERNED IS
OF COURSE SAME AS LAST YEAR, I.E., DEGREE OF
SOVIET/CUBAN KNOWLEDGE OF REBEL INTENTIONS, INVOLVEMENT IN
THEIR TRAINING, SUPPORT FOR THEIR INVASIONS AND COUNSEL
WITH REGARD TO THEIR GOALS AND TIMING. MATLOCK

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